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Identical letters dated 18 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 29 May to 28 August 2015 (S/2015/699):

- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that it is committed to its obligations under the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and has accordingly respected the mandate of UNDOF and facilitated its work in every way. For over four decades, for as long as Israel has occupied the Syrian Golan, the Government has cooperated and coordinated closely and fully with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDOF command.

- Syria again stresses that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. UNDOF is therefore present on a temporary basis until such a time as Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan comes to an end and Israel withdraws from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981).

- Mindful of its obligations, Syria has exercised the utmost restraint in responding to the activities of armed terrorist groups in the UNDOF area of operation, which the Secretary-General mentions in the report. It understands the nature of the region and the obligations that are in force. In that regard, my Government wishes to note that the actions of Syrian law enforcement forces in the area of separation are the very least that the Syrian Government can do in response to appeals from the local population. The latter has borne the brunt of the terrorists' operations, which have also been directed against United Nations personnel, premises and vehicles. We sincerely wish that the report had made explicit reference to the terrorist party that recently stole two United Nations armoured vehicles, especially since terrorist groups are using those vehicles to terrorize not only civilians but also United Nations personnel, a fact noted in several paragraphs of the report, including paragraph 14, which states that on 14 June, armed individuals fired 12 rounds of gunfire in the direction of six UNDOF personnel.

- Israel, however, has refused to implement United Nations resolutions requiring it to end its occupation and withdraw from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to

the line of 4 June 1967, and has continued to violate the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement, the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions, as documented by the report. In the course of the crisis in Syria, Israel has added a new chapter to the lengthy annals of its crimes by providing direct logistical support to armed terrorist groups, which are using the area of separation as a haven now that UNDOF forces have withdrawn from their positions after some of their troops were abducted by those groups. Paragraph 6 of the report documents that cooperation. It states that, on at least five occasions in June, United Nations personnel at observation post 54 observed interactions between persons from the Bravo side and the Israel Defense Forces, including the transfer of persons.

- The Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities and implement the Secretary-General's call in paragraph 32 upon countries with influence to strongly and urgently convey to the armed terrorist groups in the UNDOF area of operations the need to cease any actions in violation of the Disengagement Agreement. The Security Council must address without delay this grave situation with the seriousness and attention it deserves, and take immediate deterrent measures against those States that are known to support armed terrorist groups, including the Nusrah Front, the Yarmuk Brigade and other terrorist organizations.

- Syria reiterates that the camps on the ceasefire line, which are purportedly intended for humanitarian purposes, are in fact logistical bases for armed terrorist groups to smuggle ammunition and weapons from occupied territory into Syria in order to carry out terrorist acts in Syria with Israeli supervision and planning.

- The Syrian Government again stresses that UNDOF must continue to fulfil its mandate within the context of Security Council resolutions and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Syria undertakes to continue supporting UNDOF as it has done over the years, taking into account the points made above, so that UNDOF personnel can return to their positions in the area of separation securely and in cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government, after that area has been purged of armed terrorist groups. That outcome would enable the Force to fulfil its mandate as prescribed.

- While commending the efforts of UNDOF to fulfil its mandate, Syria wishes again to emphasize the need to address the fundamental reason for the presence of UNDOF in the region, namely, the continuing Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. The Security Council must take immediate action to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), and to compel Israel to withdraw fully from the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations